

EXTRACT

*From a Sermon preached by Bishop ELLIOTT, on the 18th September,
containing a TRIBUTE to the Privates of the Confederate Army.*

PROVERBS, CH. XXIV, vv. 17-18. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

"Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him and he turn away his wrath from him,"

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We have been gathered together to-day by a proclamation of our President, to return thanks to Almighty God for a series of brilliant victories won by our gallant soldiers over the invaders of our soil. Most fervently do we thank Him for his presence with us upon those fields of terrible conflict, for the skill of our commanding generals, for the heroism of our officers of every grade, for the valor and self-sacrifice of our soldiers, for the glorious results which have followed upon the success of our arms. Most devoutly do we praise and bless His holy name, this day, for the deliverance of our country from the polluting tread of the enemy and for the punishment which he has seen fit to inflict upon those who vainly boasted that they would devour us. We give all the glory to Him, while we cannot forget the living heroes whose inspired courage led them triumphant over fields of desperate carnage, nor the martyred dead who have poured out the gushing tide of their young and noble life-blood for the sacred cause which carried them to the battle-field. But battles, at last, even with all the dazzling halo which surrounds them, are but fields of slaughter, unless made illustrious by the principles which they involved or by the spirit which animated and ruled over them. The meeting of barbaric hordes upon the fields of blood, of which history is full, where men fought with the instinct and ferocity of beasts, simply for hatred's sake or the love of war, is disgusting to the noble mind, and carries with it no idea save that of brutality. We could not thank God for victories such as those, and therefore, in keeping this Holy Festival, our thankfulness must rest more upon the cause for which he has called us to arms, upon the spirit which has accompanied it, and upon the guardianship which he has established over us, than upon the mere triumphs of the battle field.

We do not place our cause upon the highest level until we grasp the idea that God has made us the guardians and champions of a people whom he is preparing for his own purposes, and against whom the whole world is banded. The most solemn relation upon earth is that between parent and child, because in it immortal souls are committed to the training of man not only for time but for eternity. There is no measure to its sublimity, for it stretches upwards to the throne of God and links us with immortality. We tremble when we meditate upon it and cry for Divine help when we weigh its responsibilities. What shall we think, then, of the relation which

subsists between a dominant race, professing to believe in God and to acknowledge Christ, and a subject race, brought from their distant homes and placed under its charge for culture, for elevation, and for salvation, and while so placed contributing by its labor to the welfare and comfort of the world. What a trust from God! What reliance has he placed upon our faithfulness and our integrity! What a sure confidence does it give us in his protection and favor! His divine arrangements are placed in our keeping. Will he not preserve them? His divine purposes seem to be intermingled with our success. Will he not be careful to give us that success, and just in the way that he shall see to be best for us? His purposes are yea and amen in Christ Jesus and cannot be overturned by man. It places our warfare above any estimate which unspiritual minds can make of it. While many other motives are urging us to the battle field, and we rush forward to defend our liberties, our homes, our altars, God is super-adding this other motive—the secret of His own will—is making it to produce within us, unconsciously perhaps to ourselves, a power which is irresistible. Our conscience in this war is thus made right towards God and towards man; our heart is filled with His fear and His love; our arm is nerved with almost super-human strength, and we have reason to thank him, not only for what he has done for us, but for what he has restrained us from doing for ourselves and others from doing for us. This noble cause has made him our guide and our overruling governor, and we are moving forward, as I firmly believe, as truly under his direction, as did the people of Israel when he led them with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night.

Next to the cause in which we are engaged, we have to thank God for the spirit of our people and of our armies. Such a contest as this which we are waging could never have been carried on successfully without such an entire devotion as pervades the States of this Confederacy. Although shut in from the rest of the world, and deprived of all our accustomed luxuries, and many, even, of our comforts; although cut off from intercourse with those we love in foreign lands, many of whom are near and dear to us; although forbidden even to know what is going on in science, or literature, or art; although stripped of all legitimate commerce and trade; although, in some of the professions, debarred from all business and all means of profit: although left with the ruling product of the country incapable of sale, save when a speculative demand within our own borders may arise for it, there is yet heard no murmuring, no complaint, no disaffection, but all are willing to bear and to suffer for the cause's sake. God has given us a willing mind, and we cheer each other on in faith and trustfulness. And not only to the sterner sex has God given this enduring temper, but the attitude of woman is sublime. Bearing all the sacrifices of which I have just spoken, she is moreover called upon to suffer in her

affections, to be wounded and smitten where she feels deepest and most enduringly. Man goes to the battle-field, but woman sends him there, even though her heart strings tremble while she gives the farewell kiss and the farewell blessing. Man is supported by the necessity of movement, by the excitement of action, by the hope of honor, by the glory of conquest. Woman remains at home to suffer, to bear the cruel torture of suspense, to tremble when the battle has been fought and the news of the slaughter is flashing over the electric wire, to know that defeat will cover her with dishonor and her little ones with ruin, to learn that the husband she doted upon, the son whom she cherished in her bosom and upon whom she never let the wind blow too rudely, the brother with whom she sported through all her happy days of childhood, the lover to whom her early vows were pledged, has died upon some distant battle-field and lies there a mangled corpse, unknown and uncared for, never to be seen again even in death. Oh! those fearful lists of the wounded and the dead! How careless we pass them over, unless our own loved ones happened to be linked with them in military association, and yet each name in that roll of slaughter carries a fatal pang to some woman's heart—some noble, devoted woman's heart. But she bears it all and bows submissive to the stroke. "He died for the cause. He perished for his country. I would not have it otherwise, but I should like to have given the dying boy my blessing, the expiring husband my last kiss of affection, the bleeding lover the comfort of knowing that I kneeled beside him." This is the daily language of woman throughout the Confederacy, and whence could such a spirit come but from God, and what is worthy to produce it but some cause which lies beyond any mere human estimate. And when we turn to our armies, truly these victories are the victories of the privates. God forbid that I should take one atom of honor or of praise from those who led our hosts upon those days of glory—from the accomplished and skilful Lee—the admirable Crichton of our armies—from the God-fearing and indomitable Jackson, upon whose prayer-bedecked banner victory seems to wait—from the intrepid Stuart, whose cavalry charges imitate those of Murat, from that great host of generals who swarm around our country's flag as Napoleon's Marshals did around the Imperial Eagle, but nevertheless our victories are the victories of the privates. It is the enthusiastic dash of their onsets, the fearless bravery with which they rush even to the cannon's mouth, the utter recklessness of life, if so be that its sacrifice may only lead to victory, the heartfelt impression that the cause is the cause of every man, and that success is a necessity. What intense honor do I feel for the private soldier! The officers may have motives other than the cause, the private soldier can have none. He knows that his valor must pass unnoticed, save in the narrow circle of his company; that his sacrifice can bring no honor to his name, no reputation to his family: that if he sur-

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vives he lives only to enter upon new dangers with the same hopelessness of distinction; that if he dies, he will receive nothing but an unmarked grave, and yet is he proud to do his duty and to maintain his part in the destructive conflict. His comrades fall around him thick and fast, but with a sigh and tear he closes his ranks and presses on to a like destiny. Truly the first monument which our Confederacy rears, when our independence shall have been won, should be a lofty shaft, pure and spotless, bearing this inscription: "TO THE UNKNOWN AND UNRECORDED DEAD."

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Thanksgiving for Victory.

O Almighty God, the Sovereign Commander of all the world, in whose hand is power and might, which none is able to withstand; we bless and magnify Thy great and glorious name for these happy victories, the whole glory whereof we do ascribe to Thee, who art the only giver of victory. And we beseech Thee give us grace to improve these great mercies to Thy glory, the advancement of Thy Gospel, the honor of our country, and as much as in us lieth to the good of all mankind. And we beseech Thee, give us such a sense of these great mercies as may engage us to a true thankfulness, such as may appear in our lives by an humble, holy and obedient walking before Thee all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit, as for all Thy mercies, so in particular for this victory and deliverance, be all glory and honor, world without end—*Amen*.

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Thanksgiving for Peace and Deliverance from our Enemies.

O, Almighty God, who art a strong tower of defence unto Thy servants against the face of their enemies, we yield Thee praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance from those great apparent dangers wherewith we were compassed. We acknowledge it Thy goodness that we were not delivered over as a prey unto them; beseeching Thee still to continue such Thy mercies towards us, that all the world may know that Thou art our Saviour and mighty deliverer; through Jesus Christ our Lord—*Amen*.

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Selections from Holy Scriptures, appropriate for the Day.

PSALMS, 136, 144, 146.

2 CHRONICLES, CHAPTER 20 to v. 31.

1 TIMOTHY, CHAPTER 6. to v. 17.

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